An Analysis of the Pattern of Residential Mobility in Nigeria Urban Cities: Case of Aba and Enugu Metropolis

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Abstracts
The movement of households within an area is an increasingly important issue which has attracted renewed research interest over the years many in developed countries. No empirical study, however, have been carried out on the pattern of these residential location choice among the residents on the different residential densities in the urban areas. The thrust of this study therefore is to examine the pattern of residential mobility in Aba and Enugu metropolis, Nigeria. Survey research design was employed in this study. The data were derived from a questionnaire survey of 799 household heads in the areas that have had residential mobility. The questionnaire method was used to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the findings. The results revealed that the intra-neighborhood residential mobility incidence had the highest residential mobility frequency in Enugu metropolis while the inter-residential density mobility had the highest residential mobility frequency in Aba. The understanding of the patterns would aid/help urban planners and policy makers in decision making with regard to neighbourhood and house design in Nigeria

Keywords: *residential mobility, Households, frequency, densities, pattern*

1. Introduction

People change their dwellings for several reasons which may be social, economic and physical in nature. These reasons as noted by Freedman and kern (1997) include access to employment, business, educational, cultural or recreational opportunities and affordability. Others are familiarity with one location or type of location, perhaps as a result of growing up there; dwelling characteristics such as age, number of rooms, types of appliances or facilities available; or emotional attachment to a place or lifestyle. Other studies have shown that propensity to move is associated with a number of factors such as age, life-cycle stage, education, occupation, tenure, duration of residence, cost of rent and location relative to the center of the city, (Graif, 2012). These factors have frequently been found to discriminate 'movers' from 'stayers'. Other reasons include realtors' involvement in the search process and tendency of households to maximize expected utility (Speare, 1974; Olatubara, 2008). Mobility and migration have always been of great

interest to spatial demographers, because it is the mechanism whereby the character of social areas is maintained or changed (Clark 2006). Residential mobility has been acknowledged as a major force shaping the social geography of the city. The decision of individuals and households whether to move and where to move coupled with housing opportunities and costs are the major forces that bring about differentiation of wealthy from poor neighbourhoods, family type neighbourhood from those comprising of young and elderly, and neighbourhood growing from declining school age population (Limon, 2010)).

Several studies by Olatubara (2008), Beatty et al (2009) and Limon, (2010), carried out in some parts of the world and in Nigeria on such aspects of residential mobility like the patterns and effects of residential mobility on the origins and destinations of movers. These studies had been substantially focused on the combined consideration of long-term household/individual choices (such as residential relocation decisions, residential location choices, housing tenure and types) with short-term travel choices. (Kim, Pagliara, & Preston, 2005 and Graif, 2012).

Aba and Enugu urban have various neighbourhoods and these neighbourhoods are situated in various classified residential densities. Between 2010 and 2014, there had been influx of people from other parts of the country especially from the North East region of the country to the cities in the southern parts of Nigeria.

The movement of households within an area is an increasingly important issue which has attracted renewed research interest over the years many in developed countries. (Pawson and Bramley, 2000). Many researches have been carried out on the factors that influenced choice of residential locations in some developed and developing countries. In previous related studies done in Nigeria by Ozo, (1986) in Benin city, Olayinola, (2005) in Akure and Gbakeji and Ojeofo (2007) in Abuja, factors that influenced residential location choices in the areas were considered, without recourse as to whether the status of the area would affect the predisposing factors. Furthermore, no empirical study had been carried out on the pattern of these residential location choice among the residents on the different residential densities in the urban areas. This is lacking in the growing body of literature. Interestingly, most urban areas of the country have various residential densities which incidentally are characterised by people of various income strata. There is not much information available about the pattern of residential mobility in Aba and Enugu metropolis. Thus, empirical verification of the pattern of residential mobility is necessary hence this research. The objective of this study therefore is to examine the pattern of residential mobility in Aba and Enugu metropolis. The outcome of the study would be used to evolve tools and policy guidelines that would help planners and policy makers to formulate planning policies for our cities. This would go a long way to enthrone sustainable and planned neighbourhoods and also form reference materials for researchers who would be interested in carrying out similar studies.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Utility Maximisation Theory

One influential theory of location choice is called the 'utility maximisation theory'. The basic key element of this economic theory is that it suggests that people will seek to minimize commuting costs by selecting a housing location which provides greater accessibility to their workplace, alternatively they may accept increased commuting costs in exchange for less expensive housing further from employment (Alonso 1964). This theory is also sometimes called the transportation and land cost 'trade-off' as it proposes that households literally trade-off commuting and housing costs against each other (Hoang &Wakely 2000; Krizek 2003).

Although still influential, this theory has been subjected to a range of criticisms (Hoang &Wakely 2000; Graves, and Linneman, 1979). First, it assumes that households are free to locate wherever they choose, when in reality movers operate within considerable constraints when choosing a new place to live (Richardson 1977). There are relatively few houses available at any one time and sometimes certain housing types are only available in specific locations (new houses on the urban fringe for example). Also, time constraints can impose limitations on the search for somewhere to live. These constraints can lead movers to choose a second best option (Richardson 1977).

The utility maximisation theory also assumes perfect information of the housing market. People rarely, if ever, make housing choices with perfect information. Rather choices are often based on limited knowledge and made from a limited number of alternatives (Shear, 1983). Moreover, the household's evaluation of utility is often affected by their experience in the housing market (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak & Su 2005).

A further criticism of the theory relates to it ignoring other important determinants of housing choices. Hoang and Wakely (2000) suggest that such theories are flawed for their "rigid economic determinism" (Hoang &Wakely 2000,) and instead of being the result of an "economistic access/space trade-off" (Hoang &Wakely 2000). Patterns of residential location are also influenced by factors related to social status and dwelling quality. One does not have to delve too deep into the available literature to find evidence that housing choices are indeed riddled with complexity. These choices involve a wide range of non-economic factors such as household desires for racial or religious segregation (Guo & Bhat 2006; Toussaint-Comeau & Rhine 2004), reflections of self-image and social status (Sirgy, Grzeskowiak & Su 2005), access to open space and natural features (Van Ommeren et al, 1998), neighbourhood design preferences (Morrow-Jones, Irwin & Roe 2004), access to recreational opportunities (Colwell et al. 2002) and other lifestyle factors (Krizek & Waddell 2002).

The most powerful critiques of this theory, relate the changing structure of households and the location of employment in cities in many developed countries. For example, Waddell argues that "suburban employment centres have overtaken central business districts in importance, a dramatic rise in female labour force participation has made dual-earner households. (Wolpert, 1966). Changing gender roles and the increasing prevalence of dual career households mean that the interaction between household location and commuting decisions is more complex than it once was

2.2 Tiebout Theory

Another major theory is called the 'Tiebout hypotheses after the seminal article by Charles Tiebout (1956). According to this theory the main factor influencing household location choice is quality and cost of municipal services (Friedman 1981; Reshovsky 1979). The central idea here is that housing consumers 'vote with their feet' by weighing up the value of local services against local taxes and then they make residential decisions that best reveal their preferences for those services (Friedman 1981; John, Dowding & Biggs 1995). Services thought to be evaluated by households when choosing a residential location include things like public libraries, health services, education, refuse collection and street cleaning, leisure services (including parks and sports facilities), social services and law enforcement (Dowding & John 2002).

This theory has been subjected to many of the same criticisms as the trade-off model. Namely, that housing consumers have full mobility and full knowledge in their housing decisions (John, Dowding & Biggs 1995). For some this theory provides some explanation of the movement of more affluent households to suburban areas witnessed in US cities, often referred to as the "flight

from blight" effect, where those who can afford it escape from the fiscal and social problems of the city (Bayoh, Irwin & Haab 2006; John, Dowding & Biggs 1995). Of all public services there is ample evidence that perceptions of school quality wield the greatest influence over residential location decisions (Bayoh, Irwin & Haab 2006; Morrow-Jones, Irwin & Roe 2004; Vogt & Marans 2004).

As one would expect, the influence of this factor is particularly pronounced in households with children of school age (Temkin and Rohe, 2012). However, Myers and Gearin (2001) argue that while school quality continues to be important in housing location choices, its influence is declining as the proportion of households with children decreases.

3. Methods

Survey research design was employed in this study. Data collected were more of cross sectional data. Data for this research were collected from two sources and they include secondary and primary sources. The population that was considered in this research was the households in Aba and Enugu that have moved within or across the neighbourhoods and those that re-located from outside the study areas. This was because samples done on household bases gave a proper representation of the population. The sample size for this research was determined through application of Williams (1978) sample size determination formula. This formula is concerned with the application of the normal approximation with a level of confidence at 95%. An error margin of 0.05 was assumed while determining the sample size for the study.

The formula is given as:

$$S = \frac{n}{1 + n/N}$$

Where:

S = Sample size

n = The proportion of households population that was sampled which was 2.5 percent. 2.5% was used because of its aptness in calculating proportions that relates to household. (Osuala, 2009)

N = The total number of households

A sample of eight hundred and eighty two will be obtained for Enugu and five hundred and twelve for Aba.

4. Sampling Technique/Methods

Stratified, systematic and simple random sampling techniques were used to proportionately select the residential densities and respondents used in the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select streets/roads in the neighbourhoods. Systematic sampling technique was used to select the houses from each of the selected streets to be sampled. The 5th building was always selected; this was to ensure proper representativeness in the streets sampled. Proportionate allocation strategy was used to get the sample size for each of the neighbourhoods using their various household sizes. Enugu urban had 24 neighbourhoods. However, there were pockets of slums like Ugbo odogwu, Agu abor, Ugbo Obed.Stratified random sampling was used to divide these 24 neighbourhoods into residential densities- high, medium and low densities. In Enugu, The number of households for each of the selected neighbourhoods were obtained by dividing the projected population of the neighbourhoods by six (6) which is the average household size in Nigeria. (NPC, 2006). The study using the proportionate allocation strategy ensured that the

households with greater numbers had more sample size. Table 1 showed the household population and number of questionnaires that was administered:

Table 1: The sampled neighbourhoods and the sample sizes for Enugu

NEIGHBOURHOOD	PROJECTED POPULATION (2024)	HOUSEHOLD POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
Abakpa	182,836	30472	**102**
Asata	60,887	10147	**35**
Ogui	91,189	15198	**52**
Maryland	46,925	7820	**25**
New haven	85,022	14170	**48**
Uwani	83,491	13871	**46**
Independence layout	68,733	11455	**38**
G.R.A	52,049	8674	**29**
Trans Ekulu	39, 390	6565	**25**
TOTAL	**710, 522**	**118,372**	**400**

Source: Researcher's Survey, (2025).

In Aba, to ensure that the proportion of the sample reflected a true representation of the total population, Stratified, systematic and simple random sampling techniques were used to proportionately select the residential densities and respondents used in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to divide these 19 neighbourhoods into residential densities- High, medium and low density. Nine neighbourhoods were chosen from nineteen residential densities in Aba metropolis. However, the study considered those three that over the years had influx of residents. This was done through a pilot survey. In Aba, the number of households for each of the selected neighbourhoods were obtained by dividing the projected population of the neighbourhoods by six (6) which is the average household size in Nigeria. (NPC, 2006). Table 2 showed the household population and number of questionnaires that was administered:

Table 2: The sampled neighbourhoods and the sample sizes for Enugu

NEIGHBOURHOOD	PROJECTED POPULATION (2024)	HOUSEHOLD POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
Aba Crown-Land	161,836	26972	**111**
Asaokpuaja	90,057	15009	**61**
Ohabiam	141,144	23524	**96**
Abayi-Umuocham	56,925	9487	**39**
Eziukwu	35,004	5843	**24**
Ohazu	33,491	5564	**22**
Federal Housing Estate Ovom	22,348	3724	**18**
G.R.A	20,491	3674	**16**
Eziama	18,733	3133	**12**
TOTAL	580,029	**96930**	**399**

The study data compiled in a data base using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentages was used to show the proportional differences in response to a given variable in relation to 100.

A total of 799 copies of questionnaire were administered to the residents of the two cities under study. Four hundred copies were distributed in Enugu and three hundred and ninety nine in Aba. For Enugu, out of the 400 copies of questionnaire distributed in the nine neighbourhoods, only 372 were recovered

4. Results

4.1 *Pattern of Residential Mobility in Enugu*

The study showed that in Enugu metropolis, 52 respondents (14%) relocated within the same neighbourhood. Some of them were people that moved from one street adjacent their previous place of residents. Again, 74 respondents (20%) relocated from residence that were within the same residential density, but from a different nieghbourhood. Furthermore, 179 respondents (48%) posited that their previous residence was outside the present residential density but still within Enugu metropolis. The remaining 67 respondents (18%) reported that they moved from areas outside Enugu. See table 3 for tabular presentation.

Table 5.3: Past residence of Respondents

Past Residence	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Different house but within the present neighborhood	52	14
Different neighborhood but within the same density	74	20
Outside the same density but within Enugu metropolis	179	48
Outside the metropolis	67	18
Total	**372**	**100%**

Source: Researcher's field work, 2025

5.2 Pattern of Residential Mobility in Aba

The study also showed that in Aba metropolis, 110 respondents (30%) relocated to the same neighbourhood. Again, 29% relocated from residence that were within the same residential density, but from a different nieghbourhood. Furthermore, 32% (117 respondents) posited that their previous residence was outside the present residential density but still within Aba metropolis. The remaining 32 respondents (9%) reported that they moved from areas outside Aba. See table 4 for tabular presentation

Table 4: Past place of Respondents

Past Residence	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Different house but within the present neighborhood	110	30
Different neighborhood but within the same density	106	29
Outside the same density but within Aba	117	32
Outside the metropolis	32	9
Total	**365**	**100%**

Source: Researcher's field work, 2025

6. Discussions of Findings

6.1 Pattern of Residential Mobility in the study areas.

The research showed that 72% of the respondents moved from different homes but within their present neighborhood in Enugu area, while only 30% had this type of residential mobility in Aba. The research revealed that 20% moved from different neighborhoods but within same district or residential density in Enugu, while only 8% moved from outside the district (residential density) which meant that these categories of respondents moved from one particular residential density to another. The above is referred to as intra-neighbourhood mobility and that the movement could be from low, medium to high density areas and this is referred to as inter- residential density mobility. The research further revealed that majority of the movement was done into the high density areas like Abakpa and Ogui. The movement into this high density areas had been attributed to the exodus of families from the northern part of Nigeria to attach to their relatives and these attaché families usually sought homes at the high density areas which tend to have lower rentage and more affordable. Similarly, 32% of the residents madeinter- residential density mobility in Aba. This was attributed to the speedy rate at which the peripheral areas of Aba developed and urbanized. Most residents were observed to have relocated to their own residences/houses. According to Temkin and Rohe (1996), houses in the high density areas were relatively cheaper and affordable. Hence, these may account for the high rate of intra-neighbourhood residential mobility expressed in the high density areas. However, the study noted that movements that were made from outside the study areas were attributed to the terrorists insurgences in the northern part of the country. These incidences dislodged many household in the incident areas. (Theodos and Turner, 2012). The effect of this pattern of residential mobility is grave on the environment. This type of residential mobility affects not only individual families, but it changes the neighborhoods. In particular, very high residential turnover could contribute to the erosion of social control and social capital. Studies had shown a negative effect of residential turnover on a neighborhood's collective efficacy, and this loss has been linked to problems such as crime and delinquency (Melanie and Carey, 2006; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1997). Moreover, high residential turnover promote further mobility, which suggested the link found between residents' desire to move and the perceptions that neighborhood residents move frequently or are not "close knit" (Clark, 2006; Lee, 1978).

7. Conclusion

The research showed that there was intra-neighborhood residential mobility, inter-residential density mobility as well as intra- residential density mobility. Intra-neighborhood residential mobility incidence had the highest residential mobility frequency in Enugu metropolis while the inter-residential density mobility had the highest residential mobility frequency in Aba. The understanding of the patterns would aid/help urban planners and policy makers in decision making with regard to neighbourhood and house design in Nigeria. Government should take into consideration the pattern of intra-city residential mobility among various residential densities in Enugu urban when providing housing accommodation. This is important in order to reduce unnecessary incidences of household mobility in the study area. Residents have equally expressed a significant preference to live closer to where they work, if opportunity is availed to them. Therefore it becomes expedient that government housing policy should be re-oriented towards addressing the location preference of housing consumers

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